



Division of Environmental Health

FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

Food Worker Card SBOH Hearing

January 2006

The current proposal is to amend two specific sections of Chapter 246-217 WAC – Food Worker Cards. The proposed amendment to WAC 246-217-015 will conditionally exempt adult family home food workers from obtaining food worker cards. The proposed amendment to WAC 246-217-025 will add “food allergy awareness” to the list of required training topics.

Adult Family Home Workers

- During the 2005 legislative session, SHB 1591 amended RCW 69.06 by conditionally exempting employees of adult family homes.
- The law was changed to allow food workers in adult family homes to substitute food safety training obtained as part of the training for caregiver certification by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in place of the training required for a food worker card issued by a local health jurisdiction. DOH Food Safety Program will continue to work with DSHS to periodically review the caregiver training for accuracy and focus.
- The amended law also requires continuing education of one half hour of food safety training per year be obtained by food workers in adult family homes in order for the DSHS caregiver certification to continue to substitute for a food worker card. DOH Food Safety Program is working with DSHS to find, create, or review appropriate training, as needed.

Food Allergy Awareness

- The State Board of Health has received requests to update the food worker training to include information about food allergies.
- About 7 million people in the U.S. are allergic to one or more food items. Even a small amount of an unrecognizable ingredient in a food can result in a severe, even life-threatening, reaction in someone who is allergic to that ingredient.
- Many food workers are unaware of the hazard of food allergies and do not understand the importance of questions from customers about food ingredients.
- A brief discussion on food allergies will be included in all food worker card training and/or provided to applicants.
- The current Food Worker Card Manual, updated in April 2005, already contains a short section on food allergy awareness. DOH Food Safety Program will assist local health jurisdictions to create other food allergy training materials.

Contacts: Nancy Napolilli, Director, Office of Food Safety and Shellfish – 360-236-3325
Dave Gifford, Food Safety Program Manager – 360-236-3074